

Top NY POLS Back Rail Freight Tunnel

Sunday, 13 April 2003

NEW YORK -- Three of New York's highest ranking office holders are joining with Rep. Jerrold Nadler (D-NY) today to reiterate the need for the Federal government to fund construction of a Cross Harbor Rail Freight Tunnel. At a press conference at City Hall, U.S. Senators. Charles E. Schumer and Hillary Rodham Clinton called on all city officials to be united in the fight for Federal funding. Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg offered his support through a statement.

"A great city plans for its future, and if we don't figure out a way to get more goods into and out of New York City and Long Island in future decades, we could lose our competitive edge. If New York is going to grow, the Cross Harbor Freight Tunnel is an investment that we must make now," said Senator Schumer.

Senator Clinton said, "The Cross Harbor Rail Freight Tunnel is an all around winner for the City. I am proud to be working with Congressman Nadler and Senator Schumer in Washington to make the case that this project is a worthy investment of Federal funds. This project has it all -- it is good for our safety and security, our economy, our environment, and our transportation needs. Every box on the 'good for New York' checklist is checked."

Mayor Bloomberg, who listed the tunnel as one of his Administration's funding priorities in a New York City Transportation White Paper submitted recently to Congress, further endorsed funding of the tunnel today. In a statement, he said, "New York City needs to improve its rail facilities to offer a viable alternative to freight movement in all five boroughs. Because many roadways are already at capacity, and with freight volumes expected to rise more than 70% in the next twenty years, securing federal funding for a Cross Harbor Rail Freight Tunnel is a priority. I look forward to working with our Senators and Congressional delegation to secure this critical funding for the tunnel so that we may ensure the safe, efficient and environmentally responsible movement of goods through New York City's transportation network."

Said Representative Nadler, "There is absolutely no question that this project is a 'must' for New York. It is a key engine for economic growth, which is desperately needed at this point in the City's history. Beyond maintaining a diverse and flexible economic base, which has its own inherent benefits, not building this tunnel puts an immovable lid on economic development. We simply cannot handle the increased freight. But the benefits aren't just economic -- it is a matter of saving our air, saving our roads, and saving us in the event of a terrorist attack."

He added, "Having the Senators and the Mayor on board in this way is a critical step in actualizing Federal funding for this project. I thank them for joining together with me today."

There is virtually no way for rail freight to cross the Hudson River further south than a bridge near Albany, which is expensive, and as a result, over 95% of all goods destined for New York City come in by truck. The Cross Harbor Rail Freight Tunnel, running from Bayonne, NJ, or Staten Island, to Brooklyn, would connect New York City to the nation's rail network, and remove over one million trucks from city streets each year. The tunnel would significantly reduce pollution, congestion, and lower the cost of manufacturing and consumer goods. With virtually all goods coming into the City via the George Washington Bridge, there is currently no redundant system to keep the supply of goods flowing in the City if the bridge becomes inoperable following a terrorist attack. The tunnel would provide a system to ensure the uninterrupted flow of materials in any such event.

According to a study by the New York City Economic Development Corporation, the Cross Harbor Rail Freight Tunnel has a benefit-to-cost ratio of 2.2-to-1, the highest benefit-to-cost ratio of any major New York transportation project currently under consideration (most infrastructure projects barely exceed 1-to-1). The net present value of the benefit is estimated conservatively at approximately \$10.5 billion.

Rep. Nadler has served in Congress since 1992. He represents the 8th Congressional District of New York, which includes parts of Manhattan and Brooklyn.

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